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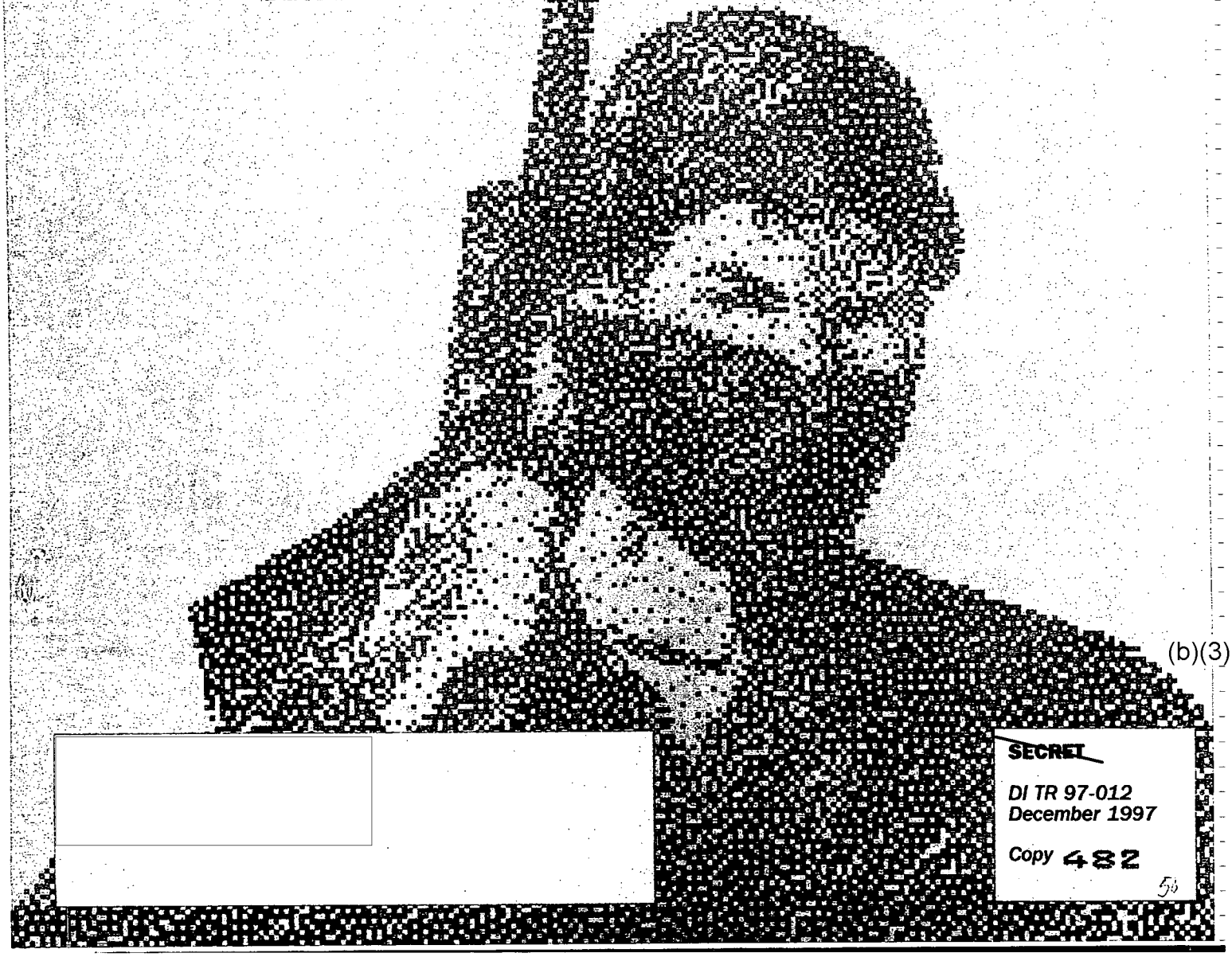
DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE COUNTERTERRORIST CENTER

# TERRORISM REVIEW

DECEMBER 1997



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# Terrorism Review (b)(3)


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*Hatsheput Temple, Luxor, Egypt.* (U)

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# Egypt: Implications of Al-Gama'at Al-Islamiyya's Attack in Luxor (b)(1)

**The terrorist attack by the Egyptian Al-Gama'at Al-Islamiyya in Luxor on 17 November that killed some 60 foreign tourists**

**The group's claim that the attack was intended to be a hostage-taking operation—ostensibly to force the release of the group's spiritual leader incarcerated in the United States—is belied by the methodical means by which the assailants killed their victims.**

This was the first attack against tourists visiting the ancient city of Luxor (b)(1) (b)(3)

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Al-Gama'at leaders publicly claimed after the Luxor attack that they had wanted to seize hostages to be offered in exchange for the release of Al-Gama'at spiritual leader Shaykh Umar Abd al-Rahman, who is incarcerated in the US. Their claim is undermined, however, by the methodical manner in which the attackers pursued their victims during the 30 minutes when they met no resistance from security forces. They reportedly left one leaflet claiming responsibility for the incident inside the mutilated body of a Japanese victim. (b)(3)

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The attackers reportedly left a leaflet at the scene claiming allegiance to



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Mustafa Hamza, the Gama'at leader who masterminded the assassination attempt against President Mubarak in Ethiopia in June 1995 and is reported to be in Afghanistan. In addition, a lawyer and "reformed" Gama'at associate in Egypt told an Egyptian news agency the operation was planned in Afghanistan by Hamza and "Ahmad Taha," who undoubtedly is Gama'at leader Rifa'i Ahmad Taha Musa.

***Operational Details Point to Calculated Attack***

*The attack on 17 November at a popular pharaonic temple in Luxor was launched around 0930 and lasted nearly 30 minutes. Eyewitnesses report the attackers, six males ranging from 20-to-30 years old, carried AK-47 assault rifles and wore black Central Security Forces uniforms—not the first time the group has attacked wearing Egyptian security uniforms—and black bandanas inscribed with the words "until death" in Arabic. They first stabbed three police guards at the site and then methodically proceeded to shoot or to use knives or swords to kill as many foreign tourists as possible. Many reportedly were trapped in the temple's alcoves and were unable to escape. Press reports about the number of victims vary; the attackers killed 61 foreign tourists—Swiss, German, Japanese, British, French, and Bulgarian nationals—as well as four Egyptians.*

*The terrorists fled the scene in a commandeered empty tour bus before Egyptian security personnel arrived. On encountering a security roadblock, the attackers reversed direction and then abandoned the bus, fleeing on foot. The group killed one of its members wounded at the roadblock by security forces probably to prevent him from being captured and revealing information under interrogation. The other five were trapped in a cave and killed during a gunfight with police.*

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**Group Still Poses A Threat** (b)(3)

Hardline elements of Al-Gama'at are threatening publicly to conduct more high-profile attacks if Cairo continues to crack down on the organization.

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